**SUNY 4E Network of Excellence**

**Energy, Environment, Economics, and Education**

**Title of Project:** Southern Tier Energy Production: Powering Up Middle School Writers to Learn about Their Communities

**Project Co-PIs:** Dr. Kathleen Magiera and Dr. Jennifer Moon Ro

**Project Participants:** Dr. Barbara Chorzempa and Dr. Mary Kay Szwejbka

**Funding:** Category B

**Date:** July 16, 2014

**Project Update**

On June 12, Dr. Jennifer Moon Ro and Dr. Kathleen Magiera from The State University of New York at Fredonia, Dr. Mary Kay Szwejbka from Jamestown Community College, and Dr. Barbara Chorzempa from SUNY New Paltz had a face-to-face meeting with Mr. Jeff Kresge and Mr. Jayme Genco at the Science Building on the Jamestown Community College campus. Mr. Kresge and Mr. Genco are middle school social studies teachers from Persell Middle School in the Jamestown Public Schools. Mr. Jason Kathman and Ms. Allyson Smith are also part of the Persell Middle School team but could not attend the meeting. Dr. Mike Jabot, a Science Educator from Fredonia and Mr. Paul Benson from Fredonia’s Office of Sponsored Programs also joined in the discussion. Mr. Benson invited Mr. Andy Wheelock from the Erie 1 Western New York Regional Information Center (WNYRIC) to assist us with technology that could enhance the interdisciplinary writing instruction process.

We discussed how STEM-related topics such as energy production could be incorporated into the eighth grade American History curriculum while improving students’ content area writing skills. Mr. Wheelock from the Erie 1 WNYRIC suggested a digital platform entitled 3D Game Lab to encourage middle school students to write more strategically about science in the context of social studies. On July 16, we had a follow-up hybrid meeting (face-to-face and conference call) with SUNY faculty and two Persell Middle School teachers. We discussed with Mr. Wheelock how implement the 3D Game Lab for the fall and eventually replicate this across the Southern Tier in other middle school social studies classes. We will meet again at BOCES on July 24 for a live demonstration of the 3D Game Lab. Dr. Jabot will be advising us on how to embed appropriate science content in the social studies curriculum. In conclusion, we are looking at additional grant sources to help with our research on improving writing in the content areas by incorporating STEM-related topics.